

Plugin Guidelines

These are the guidelines for publishing OpenCPN Plugins on OpenCPN.org:

Plugins published on OpenCPN.org must be distributable under the license terms of [GPL V2](#) or later.

1. In particular, this means that the Plugin author must arrange for independent publication of the source code of the Plugin. OpenCPN.org will not host the Plugin source code. [Sourceforge](#) or [Github](#) are acceptable source publication methods. Others may be approved on application.
2. Plugins published on OpenCPN.org must be ported and available for one of the following list of platforms:
3. Debian style Linux
4. Microsoft Windows
5. Macintosh OS-X
6. *Developers should keep in mind that the usability and popularity of a Plugin is directly related to its platform portability, and so should strive to make their Plugins available for all OpenCPN platforms.*
7. Plugins published on OpenCPN.org must be freely available for user download on demand, without fee or cost.
8. Plugin binaries may exist on the OpenCPN.org server or elsewhere

Hints for using GitHub:

- Developers should avoid including any compiled or extraneous files alongside the source code. This increases download times and bloats any releases.
- Always consider making a release tag. This produces a zip file of the source code and a tarball.
- Version numbers of releases should be lower case (e.g. v1.1). This makes life easier for Gentoo package makers.
- DLLs (Windows) and other files associated with the plugin can be added to the releases section of your plugin GitHub page. You may wish to make a Windows installer yourself to place here.
- Visual Studio inserts a 'Version.h' file in the source code. This is not needed and should be removed.

How to publish OpenCPN plugins on OpenCPN.org:

Before asking for a plugin to be added to the OpenCPN.org server consider submitting a Beta version by following the guidelines [here](#). This allows users to test and review the plugin, offer suggestions and notify the author of any bugs.

Even at the Beta stage you are encouraged to produce a user guide for the plugin. A template showing the sort of information needed is [here](#).

When you are satisfied that the plugin is ready for release please look at the [Plugin Submissions](#) page for more details.

You can have edit access to this wiki, allowing you to make the User Guide. There is a User Guide template [here](#) and the completed guide can be added to the [OpenCPN User Manual](#).

Even after the plugin has been published bugs may still exist or you may wish to improve the plugin. If work is being done on a further beta version it may be useful to have an entry on the [Beta Plugins](#) page to help users find and review the update to your work.

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